

### Step 3

Consider your existing controls or note where the information may be found.

For each hazard that you have identified, do the precautions already taken:

- meet any standards set by a legal requirement?
- comply with any recognised industry standard?
- represent good practice?
- reduce risk as far as reasonably practicable?

Have you provided:

- adequate information, instruction or training?
- adequate systems or procedures?

Consider any risks which are not adequately controlled and what action you can take.

### Step 4

Write down the significant hazards and your conclusions. Examples might be "Electrical installations: insulation and earthing checked and found sound" or "Fumes from welding: local exhaust ventilation provided and regularly checked".

Risk assessments must be suitable and sufficient. They do not need to be perfect!

To make things simpler, you can refer to other documents, such as manuals, the arrangements in your health and safety policy statement, company rules, manufacturers' instructions, your health and safety procedures and your arrangements for general fire safety.

### Step 5

Sooner or later you may bring in new machines, substances, or procedures, which could lead to new hazards. If there is any significant change, add to the assessment to take account of the new hazard.

In any case, it is good practice to review your assessment from time to time, so set a date when you will review the assessment anyway.

Tell your employees, and anyone else affected, about your findings, and ask for their comments.

Do your employees know that they have duties too. They should -

- follow the appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety
- Make proper use of equipment provided for their safety
- Co-operate with you as their employer on health and safety matters
- Inform you if they identify hazards
- Take care to ensure that their activities do not put others at risk



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# *RISK ASSESSMENTS*



The questions and information in this leaflet may prompt you, or your family, friends or associates, to plan your affairs so as to save money or generate extra income.

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**W. FOWLES & Co**  
*Chartered Accountants*

Do you know that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publish a leaflet “Five Steps to Risk Assessment” on which this leaflet is based?

Do you know that, if you run a business, you are legally required to assess the risks in your workplace? If you have five or more employees you must keep a written record, and a smaller business would be wise to do so.

Do you know that the required risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm? Put that way, you probably do risk assessments every day, but do you record your findings?

Do you know the HSE leaflet states “If you are a small firm and you understand what’s involved, you can do the assessment yourself”? You do not have to be a health and safety expert, but you can employ an expert if you want to.

Do you know that you should consider the risks on any premises that your workers visit?

Do you know that you can take into account any precautions you already take under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)?

Do you back up your computer data? Do you take that backup media off site? Do you have a disaster recover plan? How quickly could you replace your computer(s)? How quickly could you restore your data? Do you test your recovery procedures?

Do you check that your staff position their computer keyboards and monitors correctly, and take appropriate breaks to avoid muscle strain, repetitive strain injury and dry eyes?

Do you know the HSE publish guidance on a variety of subjects such as Manual Handling which indicates generally acceptable guidelines?

### Step 1

If you are doing the assessment yourself, walk around your workplace and look afresh at what could reasonably cause harm. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on significant hazards which could result in serious harm or affect several people.

If you open a cupboard and find some bleach, think what damage it might cause. Is the container securely closed? Is it clearly labelled?

Use the following examples as a guide -

- slipping/tripping hazards (e.g. poorly maintained floors or stairs)
- fire (e.g. from flammable materials)
- chemicals (e.g. battery acid or bleach)
- moving parts of machinery (e.g. blades)
- working at height (e.g. from mezzanine floors)
- ejection of material (e.g. from plastic moulding)
- pressure systems (e.g. steam boilers)
- vehicles (e.g. fork-lift trucks)
- electricity (e.g. poor wiring or loose cabling)
- dust (e.g. from grinding)
- fumes (e.g. from welding)
- manual handling
- noise
- poor lighting
- low temperature

Do you know that Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2004 requires you to assess what fire prevention and protection systems are required, and what level of fire safety training your staff require? Fire Brigade inspectors will ask to see your new fire risk assessment.

### Step 2

Decide who might be harmed.

Think about categories of workers rather than specific individuals, and remember they may be young workers, trainees, new or expectant mothers, or others who might be at particular risk, not just experienced people who you know.

Use the following examples as a guide -

- office staff
- maintenance personnel
- contractors
- people sharing your workplace
- operators
- cleaners
- members of the public

Pay particular attention to those who might be extra vulnerable -

- staff with disabilities
- visitors
- inexperienced people
- lone workers

